



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of South Carolina*

Wachovia Building
Suite 500
1441 Main Street
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 929-3000
FAX (803) 254-2943

151 Meeting Street
Suite 200
Post Office Box 978
Charleston, SC 29402
(843) 727-4381
FAX (843) 727-4443

John L. McMillan Federal
Building, Room 222
401 W. Evans Street
Post Office Box 1567
Florence, SC 29503
(843) 665-6688
FAX (843) 678-8809

105 N. Spring Street
Suite 200
Post Office Box 10067
Greenville, SC 29603
(864) 282-2100
FAX (864) 233-3158

Reply to: Columbia

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
CONTACT PERSON: NANCY C. WICKER
(803) 929-3000**

**LOCAL WOMAN SENTENCED FOR HURRICANES
KATRINA AND RITA FRAUD**

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney Reginald I. Lloyd stated today that LATASIA M. LYONS, 31, of Columbia was sentenced yesterday in federal court in Columbia for converting over \$1,000 which belonged to the United States and for misrepresenting her social security number on an Application/Registration for Disaster Assistance. United States District Judge Cameron McGowan Currie sentenced LYONS to eight months imprisonment and ordered restitution in the amount of \$27,311.75.

LYONS has maintained permanent residency in South Carolina since 1996 and admitted that she was neither a resident nor a visitor of Louisiana or Texas immediately prior to or during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. During the period from September 2005 though April 2006, LYONS admitted to making false claims and receiving over \$1,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a result of losses from both Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. LYONS further admitted willful misrepresentation of her social security number on a

telephone application/registration for a false claim involving Hurricane Rita.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force, chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division, includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspectors Office, the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, and others.

This case was investigated by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Anne Hunter Young of the Columbia office prosecuted the case.